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COUNTRY East Germany

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SUBJECT Notes on the Food Situation for May 1953

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1. The East German government is at present (May 1953) preparing for the storing of the 1953 harvest. Despite the fact that this year, as in other years, a large number of local dance halls and gymnasiums will be used to store the harvest, a shortage of storage space, enough to store 450,000 tons, still exists.
2. A major problem will be the storing of grain which has been brought in by means of combines. This grain has a high degree of dampness. Available drying facilities are insufficient to dry all the grain before it is stored. In order to remedy this situation, it has been planned to convert 162 mobile drying units in the Kreise and Bezirke where combines are to work. These mobile drying units are to come from Russia. The cost of drying one ton of grain in the mobile drying units is estimated to amount to 14 to 15 rubles, whereas the farmer is paid only 4.50 rubles for each ton he raises.
3. As of 30 May 1953, feed grain imports for the first one-half year amounted to 50 per cent only. The remaining quota is now to be loaded in one operation without regard to the ultimate unloading and transloading capacities. In addition, previous imports of feed grains from Russia contained live grain beetles. Because of the size of the shipments, the grain could not be sent through gas chambers to kill the beetles. Available grain disinfesting equipment has a capacity of 960 tons every two days. Thus, any grain imports exceeding the disinfesting capacity are sent to VEAB silos without having been disinfested.
4. The supply of 1952 potatoes for public consumption will last until mid-June 1953. New potatoes which will have to be dug up prematurely will not be available for distribution until early July. Improper storing of potatoes in the fall of 1952 caused potatoes, which were destined for distribution as food, to spoil. These potatoes are to be used as fodder.

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